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Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
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AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 H-01 INT-05 OMB-01 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5455
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 3081

USIAEA

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS ENRG, PARM, TECH, MNUC, AR
SUBJECT ARGENTINE NUCLEAR PLANS

REF: A BUENOS AIRES 2863, B BUENOS AIRES 2014

SUMMARY: ARGENTINA WILL RATIFY TLATELOLCO MOST LIKELY UNDER CONDITIONS THAT TREATY WILL ENTER INTO FORCE WHEN ALL PARTIES HAVE SIGNED AND RATIFIED TREAY AND PROTOCOLS. FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS DIRECTLY WITH IAEA ARE BEING CONSIDERED, BUT BRAZIL SEEMS TO BE A MAJOR PROBLEM FROM STANDPOINT OF POWER BALANCES. REPROCESSING PLANS ARE CONTINUING. ARGENTINA IS MOVING AHEAD WIHT NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH PERU, ECUADOR, BOLIVIA, AND URUGUAY TO FILL LEADERSHIP GAP IN LATING AMERICA. END SUMMARY

1. SCIENCE COUNSELOR MET YESTERDAY WITH DR JORGE COLL,
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SECRETARY GENERAL CNEA, TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF PERTINENT ISSUES. ADMIRAL CASTRO MADERO WAS IN MENDOZA TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE MENDOZA NUCLEAR ENTERPRISES (EMPRESA NUCLEAR MENDOZA). THE "ENM" HAS DEVELOPED PLANS FOR NEW PLANTS FOR SULFURIC ACID AND URANIUM CONCENTRATION IN SAN RAFAEL. IN ADDITION, THE SOBERANIA MINE WILL BE REACTIVATED, AS WELL AS LOS GIGANTES IN CORDOBA PROVINCE.

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CASTRO MADERO WILL ALSO BE VISITING CORDOBA WITH THE
CANADIAN TEAM WHO ARE IN ARGENTINA FOR NUCLEAR TALKS.

2. TLATELOLCO AND FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS:
ARGENTINA WILL RATIFY TLATELOLCO PROBABLY AT THE UN DISARMAMENT
CONFERENCE IN MAY. THEY ARE NOT YET SURE WHETHER
PRESIDENT VIDELA WILL ATTEND. IF NOT, IT WILL BE
ANNOUNCED BY ORTIZ ROZAS, ARGENTINE CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMMISSION. ARGENTINA WILL RATIFY MOST LIKELY UNDER THE
CONDITIONS THAT THE TREATY WILL GO INTO EFFECT WHEN ALL
COUNTRIES HAVE SIGNED AND RATIFIED THE TREATY AND
PROTOCOLS, INCLUDING CUBA, USSR, FRANCE AND US. WHEN
TREATY GOES INTO EFFECT, ARGENTINA WOULD HAVE 18 MONTHS TO
NEGOTIATE FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS WITH IAEA. HOWEVER,
WAS COLLS OPINION WHAT ARGENTINA MAY NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY
WITH IAEA ON FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME
WHICH COULD VERY WELL BE BEFORE THE TLATELOLCO TREATY
WOULD BECOME EFFECTIVE.

3. US NOTE ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION:
THE US POSITION IS PERFECTLY CLEAR TO CNEA AND A DISCUSSION
WAS HELD LAST WEEK WITH THE FONOFF ON THE VARIOUS
RAMIFICATIONS INVOLVED. THE FONOFF IS PREPARING AN ANSWER
TO THE US, INDICATING ARGENTINA WILL BE RATIFYING TLATELOLCO
UNDER THE FIRST STAGE AND US WOULD BE RATIFYING PROTOCOL I,
AS DISCUSSED BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRESIDENT VIDELA.
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THE SECOND STAGE WOULD INCLUDE FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS WHICH
WOULD EVENTUALLY BECARRIED OUT DIRECTLY WITH THE IAEA.
COLL SAID ARGENTINAS MAIN PROBLEM WITH ACCEPTING FULL
SCOPE SAFEGUARDS IS BRAZIL. THIS IS A POLITICAL AND
MILITARY ISSUE THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED ALONG WITH THE
NEED FOR COOPERATION WITH SUCH COUNTRIES AS US, CANADA,
WEST GERMANY, AND FRANCE ON A NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM THE
GOA WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO ENHANCED COOPERATION WITH THE
US IF FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS ARE ACCEPTED. THIS WOULD
INCLUDE PROVISIONS OF HEAVY WATER AND OTHER MATERIALS.
(COLL DID NOT SPECIFY HEAVY WATER TECH.)

4. REGARDING THE THIRD STATE - DEFERRAL OF REPROCESSING,
COLL MADE NO COMMITMENT BUT INDICATED A REPROCESSING
FACILITY WAS IN CNEA LONG TERM PLANS.

5. LEU PROGRAM:
ARGENTINA IS PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT A SMALL EXPERIMENTAL
REACTOR IN BARILOCHE TO USE LEU FUEL. DR COLL WAS VERY
INTERESTED IN THE US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FIVE YEAR PROGRAM
FOR DEVLOPMENT OF LEU AT THE ARGONNE LABS. HE HOPED
ARGENTINA COULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM OF COOPERATION.

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HOWEVER, THE RA 3 REACTOR AT EZEIZA CANNOT BE CONVERTED
FOR THREE YEARS AND WILL REQUIRE A NEW CHARGE OF HEU
FROM THE US. CNEA WILL COMPLETE THE NECESSARY FORMS FOR
THE REQUEST BY NEXT WEEK (SEE REFTEL A).

6. NEW US NON PROLIFERATION LEGISLATION:
CNEA IS EXAMINING THIS CLOSELY AND WILL MEET WITH SCI COUNS
NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS THE NEW ACT IN DETAIL. THE MAJOR
ITEM NOW IS WHETHER US WILL FURNISH ANY FURTHER NUCLEAR
MATERIALS SUCH AS HEU OR LEU TO ARGENTINE BEFORE A NEW
AGREEMENT IS NEOTIATED. (EMBASSY WAITING FOR DEPARTMENTS
ANSWER TO REFTEL B ON THE SUBJECT.) IN GENERAL COLL SEES
NO REAL PROBLEMS WITH NON PROLIFERATION ACT AND CIVILIAN
USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY.
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7. GENERAL ATOMICS VISIT:
CNEA WOULD WELCOME VISIT OF GENERAL ATOMICS REPRESENTATIVES
TO DISCUSS PROVISION OF LEU TRIGA FUEL AND EXPERTISE
ON REACTOR CONSTRUCTION FOR USE OF LEU. HOWEVER, CNEA IS
INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING ITS OWN SYSTEM AND LEU FOR
FUTURE PROGRAM. WEEK OF MAY 1 HAS TENTATIVELY
BEEN SET FOR THE VISIT. THIS WILL BE CONFIRMED NEXT
MONDAY.

8. CANADIAN VISIT:
CNEA OFFICIALS MET LAST MONDAY WITH DR ROSS CAMPBELL,
PRESIDENT OF THE CANDIAN ATOMIC CNERGY COMMISSION, AND A
TEAM OF CANADIAN NUCLEAR EXPERTS WHO ARE VISITING ARGENTINA
TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND FINANCING
AT THE CANDU IN EMBALSE, AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES OF
COOPERATION. THE TALKS WENT FAIRLY WELL, AND THE

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STR-07 TRSE-00 /157 W
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R 211950Z APR 78
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GROUP IS VISITING THE PLANT AT CORDOBA THIS WEEK. THERE
HAVE BEEN NO AGREEMTNS AS YET ON FUTURE COOPERATION.
ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IS THE AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH
CANADA IN 1973 FOR TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY (INCLUDING
HEAVY WATER) WHICH THE CANADIANS CLAIM NOW FALLS UNDER THE
LATEST CANADIAN SAFEGUARD REGULATIONS REQUIRING
ARGENTINA TO BE A SIGNATORY OF THE NPT OR ACCEPT FULL SCOPE
SAFEGUARDS. FINANCING IS ANOTHER PROBLEM THAT MUST BE
RESOLVED.

9. NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES:
ARGENTINA HAS NEGOTIATED UNDERSTANDINGS WITH PERU,
ECUADOR, BOLIVIA, AND URUGUAY FOR NUCLEAR COOPERATION
AND ASSISTANCE. IN THE CASES OF PERU AND BOLIVIA,
SMALL TRAINING REACTORS WILL BE THE FIRST STEP AND THE
TRANSFER OF ARGENTINE TECHNOLOGY FOR TRAINING PURPOSES.
BOLIVIA ALSO HAS DEPOSITS OF URANIUM AND WILL BE ASSISTED
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BY ARGENTINE MINING EXPERTS FOR URANIUM EXTRACTION.
ARGENTINE PHYSICISTS PUT THE URUGUAYAN ZERO
REACTOR INTO OPERATION LAST WEEK FOR THE FIRST TIME.
THERE ARE ALSO PLANS TO PROVIDE URUGUAY WITH A LARGER
REACTOR, PERHAPS IN THE CAME CATEGORY AS THE 10MW FOR PERU
AND PLANS FOR COOPERATION IN THE EVALUATION OF URANIUM EXPLORATION.
THE PROBLEM WILL BE TO WORK OUT THE TECHNOLOGY FOR
USE OF LEU IN THESE REACTORS.

10. DR COLL INVITED SCIENCE COUNSELOR TO VISIT
THE EZEIZA ATOMIC FACILITIES NEXT WEEK.

11. COMMENTS: EMBASSY HAS RUMORS FROM CNEA SURCES
THAT THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FRENCH RECENTLY
ON BREEDER REACTOR TECHNOLOGY. WE WILL BE REPORTING
FURTHER ON THIS AND PROGRESS ON REPROCESSING.

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